

Climate change boosting flood, disaster peril

AFP, Paris

Billions of people will be at risk from storms, floods and droughts in the near future, partly as a result of global warming, an international water agency warned on Thursday.

"By 2025, half the world's population will be living in areas that are at risk from storms and other weather extremes," the World Water Council (WWC) said, citing evidence gathered by UN and other experts.

The economic cost will be huge, especially for poor countries that are likely to bear the brunt of these events, it said.

"Extreme weather records are (already) being broken every year and the resulting hydro-meteorological disasters claim thousands of lives and disrupt national economies," said William Cosgrove, vice president of the Marseille, France-based WWC.

"The big problem is that most countries aren't ready to deal adequately with the severe natural disasters that we get now, a situation that will become much worse as storms and droughts become more pervasive."

The agency gave the warning ahead of an eight-day conference, the Third World Water Forum, which opens in Kyoto, Japan, on March 16.

The forum is the keystone of UN efforts to draw attention to world to abuse of the world's pre-

cious supplies of freshwater.

Experts say rivers and aquifers in many parts of the world are being hit by industrial pollution, sewage disposal or excessive extraction. This worsens water quality, inflicts shortages and, in tense border regions, even exacerbates the risk of war.

The WWC emphasised that water supplies in many countries could be badly affected by climate change inflicted by the burning of fossil fuels.

As the temperature of the sea and atmosphere steadily rises, this could be calamitous for traditional rainfall patterns, it said in a press release.

"The expected climatic change during the 21st century will further intensify the hydrological cycle, with rainy seasons becoming shorter and more intense in some regions, while droughts in other areas will grow longer in duration, which could endanger species and crops and lead to drops in food production globally," the WWC said.

Another result of climate change will be the risk of more frequent, and possibly more brutal, storms, extreme weather events.

Part of the problem, it added, was that of human habitation in vulnerable areas, such as encroachment in flood plains.

The economic cost of extreme weather and flood catastrophes is severe and set to rise, hitting poorest nations the hardest, the

WWC said.

From 1971-1995, floods affected more than 1.5 billion people, or 100 million a year, a total that includes 318,000 killed and more than 81 million left homeless.

The number of major flood disasters has risen relentlessly.

There were six in the 1950s; seven in the 1960s; eight in 1970s; 18 in the 1980s; and 26 in the 1990s.

"Droughts are becoming more severe and widespread," the WWC said. "Up to 45 per cent of reported deaths from natural disasters between 1992 and 2001 resulted from droughts and famines. The most vulnerable communities are impoverished peoples occupying marginal rural and urban environments."

It sounded the alarm for countries in Africa, saying the "unprecedented droughts" many have experienced "may signal widespread climate change".

The Council gave the example of Ghana's Akosombo Reservoir, a huge lake created in 1966 that at one time supplied 95 per cent of the country's power needs and had enough electricity left over to export to neighbouring countries.

Now, however, the lake is less than half full because of less rainfall. That has had a huge economic impact, for electricity has had to be derived from other sources and, sometimes, must be rationed.



PHOTO: STAR

The Bangla Academy premises teem with visitors on the last day of the Ekushey Book Fair in the city yesterday.

Indo-Pak battle today

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the past.

"We will turn a blind eye to street celebrations if India wins against Pakistan but a defeat would not be allowed to be translated into rowdy behaviour against a particular community," a senior police official said in New Delhi.

The Indian media Thursday reported a rush to reach South Africa for Saturday's match by parliamentarians, businesspeople and executives.

Even the tie Wednesday with England managed to disrupt normal activities, although it took place after working hours in India.

Celebrations erupted in clubs and hotels in India and firecrackers in the national capital woke up people at the end of the game in Durban that finished at 2:00 am local time Thursday.

The nuclear-armed South Asian rivals have not met on cricket fields since June 2000, when India put an embargo on bilateral cricket ties in protest at Pakistan's alleged support to Islamic militancy in disputed Kashmir.

They have fought two of their three wars over Kashmir, and were on the brink of another during last year's military standoff at the borders sparked by an attack on the Indian parliament

which New Delhi blamed on Islamabad.

Former prime minister Inder Kumar Gujral, an ardent cricket fan and a moderate among India's hawkish political establishment, hailed the upcoming clash between Ganguly's men in blue and Pakistan's Waqar Younis squad.

"I am very much in favour of people-to-people relations and sport is a major item of that because I feel that whatever are the differences at the political level, travel, sports and communication should not be affected," Gujral told AFP.

"Contacts which were being built up between the two civil societies through interactions must continue," he said.

Former Indian ambassador to Pakistan SK Singh, however, was dismissive of Saturday's clash.

"We have come to the conclusion that after the attack on parliament the least amount of contact with Pakistan would be the best indication of our attitude to the whole thing."

"This match is unavoidable because of the circumstances of the World Cup but I tell Pakistan 'please leave Kashmir out of it,'" the Indian diplomat said.

In Kashmir, which is uneasily divided between the hostile neighbours and claimed in its

entirety by both, matches between Pakistan and India are marked by bouts of shelling of each other's positions by the rival armies.

According to locals, if either side is unhappy about an umpiring decision, or a wicket falls, the shelling intensifies. Whichever side wins, they add, celebrates victory with a fresh barrage of shelling.

In Calcutta, where cricket fans usually become frenzied during India's matches, Wednesday's win against England restored the team to its former glory their humiliating early loss to Australia had blackened the team in the fans' eyes, with walls around the city being painted with scathing graffiti.

However, fans were Thursday seen painting over the graffiti and continuing celebrations which had begun during the night.

"The celebrations will continue until India's match against Pakistan," said Nandan Sen, a university graduate, painting his face with colours of Indian flag.

One cricket fan in New Delhi, quoted in the media Thursday, sums up, perhaps, the national mood going into Saturday's clash: "Losing a cricket match against Pakistan will be like losing a war, a complete loss of face."

700 cases of forgery

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script, the student who sat for test on proxy, wrote the serial number of the genuine admission seeker who engaged him.

The genuine admission seeker obviously fails in the test. But he is eligible for admission as his serial number against which somebody else appeared for him is in the merit list.

Investigation revealed that a section of students of the university sat for such tests on proxy, taking money from admission seekers. They took the scope of a provision allowing first year students to sit for admission test for the second time for changing departments.

"Detection of such a huge number of admission tests on proxy proves that unfair means were going on for long," said Prof Md Sirajul Islam, Dean of the Business Studies Faculty.

The university authorities said they will take precautionary measures so that such forgery can not take place any more.

Prof Islam said, "We are planning to take viva voce of admission seekers from next year to prevent forgery. This will be one of the steps."

He said a section of coaching

SC Bar polls T H Khan, Rumi Jatiyatabadi Forum candidates for president, secy

BSS, Dhaka

Four-party alliance-backed Jatiyatabadi Lawyers Forum has nominated Justice T H Khan and Miftaunnisa Chowdhury Rumi to contest the Supreme Court Bar Association election for the posts of president and secretary.

Senior lawyers of the Forum at a meeting yesterday finalised the nominations.

Election to the Supreme Court Bar Association will be held at the end of this month.

The Forum also nominated A K Mujibur Rahman and Harun-Ar-Rashid for the posts of vice-presidents, Farid Uddin Khan and Shihabuddin Mahmud for the posts of assistant secretaries and A S M Ramzan Khan for the port of treasurer.

Father's genes may determine birth timing

REUTERS, London

Paternal genes may hold the key to repeated prolonged pregnancies and help determine the timing of birth, Danish scientists said on Thursday.

Little is known about prolonged pregnancies, which last longer than 41 weeks, but around five per cent of all pregnant women have one and they can lead to complications at birth.

"The research is a first step to finding out what characterises women that go post-term because we don't really know who they are," Annette Wind Olesen, a researcher at Aarhus University in Denmark, told Reuters.

"It could also contribute to the knowledge of what triggers human delivery."

Shrimp

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international standard in shrimp production and processing.

Bill said, besides food safety, buyers also insist on certification of "honesty and transparency" in the whole process.

Only a coordinated effort can ensure this by use of good quality fry, feed and ice, and maintenance of a totally germ-free atmosphere in processing and transportation, he said.

According to industry sources, shrimp production, management and marketing have come under scrutiny of consumers, buyers, government watch-dogs and environmental groups in importing countries.

Shrimp Hatchery Association of Bangladesh (SHAB) President Nizam M Selim also spoke at the press conference, held at the Pioneer Hatchery Ltd.

A workshop on 'Shrimp Industry of Bangladesh-Codes and Certification for Survival and Sustainability' was also held here yesterday.

Hasina

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politicisation of the administration, the Awami League chief said, "A single family has looted Tk 11,000 crore in last one and a half years."

She said the government has become friendless and lost credibility, and is now going door to door begging for aid.

Earlier, president AKM Shamsul Abedin Sona Mia and general secretary Abdul Matin of Bogra Bar Association presented a crest to Sheikh Hasina and also spoke.

AL central leaders Abdus Samad Azad, Tofail Ahmed, Abdul Jalil, Obaidul Qader, Abdul Mannan, Mukul Bose, advocate Shahara Khatun, Bogra AL president Momtaz Uddin and acting secretary Majibur Rahman Majnu and municipal chairman Rezaul Karim Mantu were present.

US consulate

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Shah said one of the attackers had been arrested and his motorbike seized.

The attack is the second deadly strike outside the consulate in less than a year. On June 14 a suicide car bomb attack killed 12 Pakistanis outside the consulate building. The consulate moved to new premises two months later.

Five Islamic militants are currently on trial for the June attack.

Battle royale

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Canada, Sri Lanka and South Africa. The team had managed scores of 120, 124 and 108 respectively.

"He (Al-Shahrari) is a very attacking batsman and played well in the lead-up games before the World Cup. So it's a good opportunity for him to make a big score because the Kenyan bowling is weaker compared to the other teams," said skipper Khaled Mashud.

He also confirmed that Tushar Imran would be replacing Habibul Bashar who has had a wretched time with the bat recently.

Bashar, the leading run-scorer in Tests for Bangladesh, was out first-ball while trying to pull paceman Jacob Oram in the last game.

With the two changes Mashud hopes that for once the batting would produce a decent total that his bowlers could try and defend.

"With a score of 250-plus you can always fancy your chances to win against any team. I think tomorrow's team has the ability to reach that mark. Ashraf's half-century the other day showed it was possible," Bangladesh captain told reporters at a press conference on Friday.

Mashud said some of the Kenyan players are playing good cricket. He however did not consider his opposite number Steve Tikolo as the main threat.

"He is not among the runs in this tournament. No doubt he is a class batsman but we also know his weaknesses," smiled Mashud.

He also thought young Collins Obuya posed no danger. The unheralded leg-spinner fashioned Kenya's memorable victory against Sri Lanka claiming five wickets.

Urban food

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traditional foods like rice, curry, lentil and handmade bread, and beverages including tea, sherbet and fruit juices are sold. The locations of this can be found mainly on the streets of Motijheel Sadarghat, Tejgaon and other busy places like bus stops, railway stations, launch ghats, etc. Maintenance of hygiene and sanitary conditions in preparing and handling the foods is lacking in most cases.

A significant aspect of our Bangla culture is reflected in our fondness for sweets. This is quite evident from the growing number of sweetmeat shops all over the city. The sweets are of a large variety and are irresistible to connoisseurs.

Some off our citizens are fond of biriani, Kabab, Ice cream, evident from the growing number establishments catering these items.

The over-all survey of our food habits, given above, seems almost similar to the food culture patterns as seen other big cities and towns of the country. This urban food culture is getting diversified with the march of time. And it is quite likely that in the near future, we may be witnessing a chain of big food shops like Machdonalds and wimpeys operating in many western cities.



PHOTO: STAR

The damaged road in front of the Asiatic Society building in the city accumulating dirty water begs attention of the Dhaka City Corporation.

Baghdad agrees

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that members could not agree whether Blix should address the council on March 6 or 7.

Hours after the report was leaked, Iraq said it agreed to start destroying its al-Samoud 2 missiles, as Blix as ordered, because they were illegal by exceeding the permitted 90-mile range.

In a letter to Blix, Iraq said it accepted "in principle" the destruction of the missiles. But it said Blix's decision was "unjust and did not take into consideration the scientific facts regarding the issue."

"In order to establish a timetable and other technical and procedural criteria required for implementation, we suggest dispatching a technical team urgently for this purpose," the letter added.

US officials quickly dismissed the Iraq offer.

"This is exactly what's been going on for years," Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told reporters in Washington. "Only when finally something ends up as a possible problem for them in the United States do he at the last minute throw in the towel and say, 'Well maybe I'll do that.'"

Navy officials said the nuclear-powered USS Nimitz, based in San Diego, would head to the Gulf region on Monday. Five other US carriers, along with their battle groups of missile-firing warships, are already in the Gulf and the Mediterranean, within striking distance of Iraq.

In addition, the Pentagon said several long-range, radar-evading B-2 stealth bombers, each capable of carrying up to 202,000-pound satellite-guided bombs, were expected to leave in the coming days.

The Pentagon already has deployed B-1 bombers and F-117 stealth fighters along with hundreds of other Air Force and Navy planes as part of a massive military buildup near Iraq, including about 200,000 ground troops and 8,000 sailors.

Bush has said the United States will lead a coalition of nations to disarm Iraq by force if necessary if Baghdad does not comply with UN demands that it give up alleged banned weapons of mass destruction.

At the Security Council, members met for the first time since the intro-

Burn unit

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dealing with any emergency. It will also have a modern post-operation observation room, intensive care unit and a special cell for acid-burn patients.

Sources at the health ministry said that an order was recently issued for purchase of the required equipment but no progress has been made on the manpower issue.

The hospital is supposed to recruit about 20 surgeons, 30 nurses and technicians.

duction of a US-British-Spanish resolution that would authorise an invasion of Iraq.

The resolution is not expected to come to a vote for another two weeks but its adoption in the 15-member council would need a minimum of nine votes in favour, with no veto from its five permanent members -- the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China.

While the United States and Britain are pressing for the new resolution, France, Russia and China want UN arms inspections to continue for at least four more months.

Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov yesterday said Russia opposed any resolution that would lead to a war to rid Iraq of weapons of mass destruction and declined to rule out a Russian veto.

"Russia does not support any resolution which could directly or indirectly open the way to an armed resolution of the Iraq problem," Ivanov told a news conference in Beijing.

"Naturally, Russia has the right of veto. If the interest of international stability demands it, Russia, of course will exercise its right," he said.

Among the 10 members that are elected for two-year terms, six including Chile and Mexico have come under intense pressure by all sides to vote for or against the resolution.

"This divided council is in fact throwing the decision on the back of the elected members while the permanent members stick to their positions without making efforts to approximate their views," Chilean Ambassador Gabriel Valdes said.

Washington's strategy is to get the minimum nine votes needed to adopt the resolution and then dare any veto-bearing nation, such as Russia, China or France, to kill the resolution.

France has the reverse strategy: if the United States does not get the nine votes, it would be spared making a decision about whether or not to veto the measure.

Robbers

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Dhaka Central Jail.

In another incident, armed hoodlums ransacked the house of a contractor at Tajmahal Road in Mohammadpur and looted cash and gold ornaments on Thursday night.

According to the contractor, Abul Kalam Azad, Road, a gang of youths led by Hanif, Sattar and Rabi met him several days ago and demanded Tk two lakh.

As he refused, the gang members attacked his residence at about 8:30pm Thursday night. They looted 18 gold bars and Tk 200,000 from the house, he alleged.

The contractor filed a case with the Mohammadpur police station.

Windies need 229

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when Jayasuriya hooked at Mervyn Dillon and the ball looped off his glove to wicketkeeper Ridley Jacobs only for umpire Dave Orchard to give him not out.

Six runs later he was caught at deep mid-wicket off Chris Gayle for 66, made off 99 balls with four fours.

Jayasuriya won the toss and decided to bat on a pitch which has favoured the side batting first in 14 out of 18 day-night internationals at Newlands.

It is a crucial match for both sides. The West Indies will probably be eliminated if they lose. Sri Lanka will have to beat hosts South Africa in Durban on Monday if they stumbled against the West Indies.

SCOREBOARD

Scorecard of the Sri Lanka innings in their World Cup group B day-night match against the West Indies at Newlands here on Friday:

SRILANKA

Atapattu run out	3
Jayasuriya c Chanderpaul b Gayle	66
Tillakaratne b Hinds	36
De Silva run out	13

Jayawardene c Powell b Hooper	9
Arnold not out	34
Sangakkara c Lara b Drakes	24
Vaas not out	28
Extras: (lb-5, w-8, nb-2)	15
Total: (For 6 wkts)	228
Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-96, 3-113, 4-131, 5-139, 6-178	
Bowler	O M R W
Dillon	10 0 30 0
Collins	10 0 62 0
Drakes	10 1 32 1
Hooper	6 0 30 1
Hinds	4 0 27 1
Gayle	10 0 42 1

Toss: Sri Lanka

West Indies: Carl Hooper (capt), Ridley Jacobs, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Pedro Collins, Mervyn Dillon, Vaseb Drakes, Chris Gayle, Brian Lara, Ricardo Powell, Yavell Richards, Ramnaresh Sarwan.

Umpires: David Orchard (Rsa) and Srinivas Venkatraghavan (Ind)

TV umpire: Brian Jerling (Rsa)

Match referee: Denis Lindsay (Rsa)

BCS exam questions

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paper. However, the OC added that he had kept a photocopy of the questions.

As many as 72 questions that appeared in the test were found among the leaked questions that were taken to the Ramna Police Station, sources said.

The preliminary test contained 100 multiple-choice questions.

Chairperson of the Public Service Commission (PSC) Prof. ZN Tahmidia Begum brushed aside the allegation saying that it was a rumour. "It is absolutely false and baseless, and I think it is a sabotage against the PSC," she claimed.

"We are at the office since early morning and no-one has lodged any complaint with us..." she added.

The Dhaka University student, who went to the Ramna Police Station, later told The Daily Star that he had obtained the questions from a BCS examinee of Salimullah Hall of Dhaka University at about 10:00am.

"Later, I went to the Dhamondhi Police Station to lodge a complaint in this regard. But, the duty officer there advised me to go

to the Ramna Police Station," the student said, on condition of anonymity.

Another student of the university said a group of students of Salimullah Hall bought a copy of the questions from a coaching centre in the city at about 9:00pm by paying Tk 10,000.

Photocopies of the 'leaked questions' were also sold at Mohsin Hall of Dhaka University till midnight, many examinees of the hall said.

"The questions were hand written and we ignored them," said an examinee. "But after the test we found dozens of questions similar to those hand written."

Sources also said copies of hand written questions were also sold at Dhaka College.

An anonymous caller rang The Daily Star Office at around 7:00pm yesterday and said the questions were leaked.

This year 1,20,500 examinees sat for the preliminary test of BCS to vie for 4,540 government posts. The examinations were held simultaneously at 111 centres in Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna, and at one centre in London.